Course Description

Throughout this quarter we will explore the various layers of complexity that have historically made up the Latina experience in the United States. Traditionally defined as women of Latin American descent born and/or raised in the United States, Latinas form part of the fastest growing ethnic group in this country yet in most aspects of public, social and cultural life they remain largely underrepresented, often rendered invisible though structural processes of erasure. Through a careful analysis of the specific histories and experiences of Latinas and the colonial legacies of the Americas, we will gain a greater understanding of the reasons behind this persistent marginalization while at the same time acquire increased knowledge about their struggles over empowerment and self-determination. In other words, in spite of the multiple oppressions that Latinas have suffered at the intersection of class, race, gender and sexuality, their personal and collective testimonios as well as their intellectual interventions provide effective strategies for women of color to survive and thrive in a neo-colonial and patriarchal world.

Of great importance to our class will be the issue of representation. How are Latinas represented in the mass media and other outlets? How do preconceptions of race, class, gender and sexuality affect this representation? How does representation influence the lives of Latinas in real and tangible ways? How is this representation different when it is Latina cultural producers themselves—namely artists, writers, performers and others—who render their own images before a larger public? We will operate under the assumption that representation is not only about the production of images, but it is also about the production of social identities that can inform cultural attitudes and behaviors as well as public policy and regulations.

Another salient component of the course will be the intellectual contribution made by Latina feminist scholars to the disciplines of feminism, ethnic studies, postcolonial theory and others. Theoretical concepts like testimonio, mestizaje, tropicalization, and diaspora, just to name a few, have been critically influenced by Latina feminist thought. We will discover, however, that these ideas are deeply rooted in women’s lived experience thus putting theory and practice into an intimate dialogue.

Disability Accommodation

The Office of Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with disabilities. They can be reached at 292-3307.
If you wish to have a disability accommodation, be sure to let me know right away.

A note on language: Even though knowledge of Spanish is not required for this class, you will find that many Latina feminist writers use code-switching in their writing, that is, they utilize both English and Spanish as part of their intellectual vocabulary. Translations or explanations of Spanish words will be provided in class as the need arises. Nevertheless, you will be expected to familiarize yourself with a few words in Spanish that have become critical components of Latina feminist discourse (*la frontera, la familia, testimonio*, etc.).

**Required Texts**


CARMEN readings.

**Course Requirements**

1- Midterm Examination (25%): You will be tested on the concepts and ideas covered in class. This will include material from the lectures and the readings. This exam will be comprised of two parts: a) ten fill-in-theblank and short answer questions, and b) two essay questions. The midterm will cover material from the first half of the quarter.

2- Final Examination (25%): This exam will have the same format as the midterm. The final will cover material from the second half of the quarter.

3- Quizzes 1 and 2 (5% each): This will be fill-in-the-blank and short answer quizzes meant to prepare you for the midterm and final examinations respectively.

4- *Testimonio* Research Paper (25%): You will write a 10-12 page paper based on a real person’s *testimonio* account coupled with secondary source research material. Specific guidelines for this paper will be handed out during the second week of class.

5- In-Class Discussion and Participation (15%): Your participation points will be based on your level of engagement with class discussion. It is extremely important that you actively partake in our classroom conversations and always come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

**Attendance Policy**

You are allowed two unexcused absences this quarter without affecting your course grade. I will subtract half a letter grade off your final grade in class for each additional absence you may incur. For those of you who leave class early or arrive late, you will earn only partial attendance credit for that day. In addition, you are still responsible for all the course material you miss during your absences (excused or unexcused.)
Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense that is strictly forbidden. Use of another’s work without proper documentation, intentional or not, is tantamount to plagiarism and thus unacceptable. For information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the following link: http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research_plagiarism.cfm

Class Discussion Etiquette

As many courses on feminism, gender and ethnic studies do, this class deals with numerous controversial and sensitive issues that often elicit heated discussion. I expect that a number of you will disagree with the opinions expressed in the class readings and discussion. I certainly expect you to express your honest opinion. Nevertheless, all in-class dialogue needs to happen within an atmosphere of civil intellectual exchange and mutual respect. Personal attacks, loud speaking, heckling and cutting people off before they are done talking will not be permitted.

Personal Emergencies

If you experience a personal emergency during this quarter such as a serious illness, death in the family, accidents and/or other unforeseen circumstances that may potentially prevent you from completing coursework in this class, please contact me immediately. I will deal with these emergencies on a case-to-case basis. Be aware, however, that you will need to provide documentation for any reported emergency in order to for me to help you. Note that social events such as weddings, vacations, quinceañeras and barmitzvahs, to cite just a few examples, are not considered emergencies.

Note on PowerPoint Presentations

I use PowerPoint as a pedagogical tool in almost all my lectures. It is important, however, that you not misunderstand the function that my PowerPoint presentations have in this course. These are meant to facilitate in-class note-taking by providing you with general outlines for each lecture. Nevertheless, I do not share my PowerPoint slides outside of class, nor do I post them on the web. Moreover, it is not sufficient for you to just write down what is up on the screen because these outlines will merely contain keywords and ideas that will not make much sense without the oral explanations and discussions that we will have in class.

Technology Policy

Please turn off all your electronic devices during class, including cell phones, iPods, MP3s, laptop computers, iPads and tablets. Unless you need to use any of these tools due to a demonstrated disability, you should be fully “unplugged” during class.

Class Calendar

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<th>WEEK 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 21</td>
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<td>Introduction</td>
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No readings

**WEEK 2**
Monday, September 26
Latina Feminist Theories: Borderlands and the “Spiritual Activism”
Readings:
* Gloria Anzaldúa, “The Homeland, Aztlán” (pp.23-35) and “La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness” (pp.99-120) in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1989), CARMEN (posted together as one file).
* AnaLouise Keating, “‘I’m a Citizen of the Universe’: Gloria Anzaldúa’s Spiritual Activism as a Catalyst for Social Change,” *Feminist Studies* 34:1/2 (Spring/Summer 2008): 53-69. CARMEN.

Wednesday, September 28
Latina Feminist Theories: Testimonio and Tropicalization
Readings:

**WEEK 3**
Monday, October 3
Colonial Legacy
Readings:

Wednesday, October 5—Proposal for testimonio paper due
The Chicana and Mexican-American Experience
Readings:

**WEEK 4**
Monday, October 10
The Caribbean Experience
Readings:

Wednesday, October 12
Challenge to Male Latino Nationalism
Readings:

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<th>WEEK 5</th>
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<td>Monday, October 17</td>
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Challenge to “White” Feminism – **Quiz 1**
Readings:

Wednesday, October 19

Latina Leadership
Readings:

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<th>WEEK 6</th>
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Education and Labor
Readings:

Wednesday, October 26

MIDTERM EXAM

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Culture and Representation: Chicana Artists
Readings:
* Clara Roman-Odio, “Queering the Sacred: Love as Oppositional Consciousness in Alma López’s Art,” in *Our Lady of Controversy*, 121-147. CARMEN.

Wednesday, November 2 - Bibliography for *testimonio* paper due
Culture and Representation: The Writings of Denise Chávez and Julia Alvarez
Readings:

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<th>WEEK 8</th>
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<td>Monday, November 7</td>
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Culture and Representation: Music and Performance
Readings:

Wednesday, November 9
Culture and Representation: Latinas/os, and the Media
Readings:

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<th>WEEK 9</th>
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<td>Monday, November 14</td>
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Culture and Representation: Latinos, Masculinity and Film

*** In-class film screening: Peter Bratt (director), La Mission (2009), starring Benjamin Bratt and Jeremy Ray Valdez***

Reading:
* Alfredo Mirandé, “‘Macho’: Contemporary Conceptions,” in Hombres y Machos, 63-79. CARMEN.

Wednesday, November 16

Gendered Violence– Quiz 2
Readings:
* Carlos G. Velez, “Se me acabó la canción: an ethnography of non-consenting sterilizations among Mexican women in Los Angeles,” Latina Issues, 183-203. CARMEN.

WEEK 10
Monday, November 21
Testimonio Paper Workshop Bring in draft of testimonio paper

Wednesday, November 23
Thanksgiving (No Classes)

WEEK 11
Monday, November 28
Sexuality and Queer Identities

*** In-class film screening: Frances Negrón-Muntaner (dir.), Brincando el Charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican ***

Readings:

Wednesday, November 30
Wrap-Up, Review and Evaluations – Testimonio paper due

***** FINAL EXAM- Tuesday, December 6, 1:30-3:18 *****